The Bishop of EXONS

CAUTION

TO HIS

DIOCESE

Against False Doctrines,

Delivered in a SERMON

AT

TRURO in *CORNWALL*

at his Primary Visitation, by Ralph Brownrig

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Anthony Sparrow

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THE PREFACE TO THE DIOCESE.

WHEN I see so many false Teachers subtilly insinuating themselves into the affections of the people, and busily inticing them by many artifices, from the stedfastness of their faith, and Allegiance to God in his Anointed and his Church. The care of the Dioceſe *committed to my charge, and the remembrance of the Account which I must give to God for your souls, sets me not only to my prayers, but my study too, to prevent your ruine; And I know no better way to do it then by performing the* Watchmans *part,* Ezek. 4. *Giving you warning to avoid the temptations, and encouraging you to stand fast in the* Lord; *and I could not finde any way to do that, but by making my advice so publick, that all who listed might receive it. And because that counsel and advice is most acceptable, when it is put into the dress of a Sermon; I resolved to make use of that Method which was most likely to instill effectually this Gaution. When I had determined this, I resolved further to present it as short and plain as might be, that it might be the more serviceable to those who most needed it, those namely who have least time to read, and least ability to understand: But withall I have indeavoured in this*

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ſhort piece to deliver all neceſſary Cautions *with as clear evidence and demonſtration out of Scriptures, as I could. It was not poſſible for me to Caution againſt every particular Error or falſe doctrine ſpread amongſt you; there be ſo many that it would have required a volume, to recount and refute them, and few would have given themſelves the trouble to read ſo large a diſcourſe; nor was it neceſſary, for it is more eaſie, and as ſafe, to ſecure from the danger of all, by ſome general Rules and Preſcriptions, which if they be obſerved, will certainly preſerve you from all damnable doctrines, and keep you ſtedfaſt in the holy Faith. I ſhall heartily deſire you to believe that this* Caution *is given you by him who loves you as his own ſoul and can with the greateſt ſincerity ſay of you, as St.* Paul *of his* Theſſalonians, *What is my hope or joy, or crown of rejoycing, are not even ye in the preſence of the Lord? Ye are our Glory and joy, if any of you ſhall draw back and fall from the ſtedfaſtneſs of the faith, my Soul ſhall have no pleaſure in him,* Heb. 10. 38. *But,* Now I live if you ſtand faſt in the Lord.

THere is lately publiſhed A *RATIONALE* upon the Book of *Common-Prayer* of the Church of *England*.

By the Lord Biſhop of *Exon*.

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1 Theſſal. 3. 8.

Now we live, if you ſtand faſt in the Lord.

Saint *PAUL* having lately converted the *Theſſalonians* to the Chriſtian Faith, was call'd to preach the Goſpel in other parts; in this his neceſſary abſence, he ſtill retains a tender fatherly affection for his children. *We being taken from you for a ſhort time, endeavoured the more abundantly to ſee your face with great deſire*, chap. 2. 17. *Wherefore we would have come unto you once and again, I* Paul *eſpecially, but Satan hindred us.* He had put upon Saint *Paul* a neceſſity of ſtaying where he was, to ſettle ſome unſeaſonable Diſputes and Controverſies with the *Stoicks* and *Epicureans*, rais'd by this great enemy of Souls, on purpoſe to divert the bleſſed Apoſtle from his charitable deſign towards the *Theſſalonians.* When St. *Paul* found himſelf thus hindred, he ſends *Timothy* with a Commiſſion, in his name, to Viſit his *Theſſalonians*, to ſtabliſh his new Converts, to comfort them, and to know their faith, *leſt by ſome means the Tempter hath tempted you, and our labor be in vain*, verſe 5. When *Timothy* had finiſh'd his Viſitation he returns to St. *Paul*, to give an account of his Enquiries and proceedings, and brought this good tidings, that he had found the *Theſſalonians*, firm and ſtedfaſt in the Faith which St. *Paul* had taught them; at the hearing of this good report, St. *Paul* breaks out into this Rhetorical expreſſion of his joy and contentment in the Meſſage, *Now we live*, &c.

I AM come hither on the very ſame errand, to know your Faith; and though I cannot but hope, that after ſo long profeſſion of the holy Faith, ye are well rooted and grounded in it, yet I cannot but know that there are amongſt us many buſie and cunning Tempters, who uſe various and ſubtile arts to withdraw you from the holy Faith; and I have reaſon to fear, as St. *Paul* did, leſt by ſome means the Tempter hath prevailed upon ſome; and therefore could no longer forbear to come and know your Faith, and if I ſhall find you like theſe *Theſſalonians*, ſtrong and ſtedfaſt therein, I ſhall ſay with the ſame ſincerity that the Apoſtle did, *Now I live if you ſtand faſt in the Lord.*

AND that you may continue conſtant and ſtedfaſt in the holy Faith which our Lord hath delivered, I ſhall briefly and plainly ſet before you ſuch rules and directions out of the holy *Scriptures* and *ancient* Writers, as by Gods aſſiſtance upon your hearty prayers, ſhall undoubtedly preſerve you.

I. *RULE*, Is to make a ſerious and hearty *Reſolution of Believing* and *adhering* to this Chriſtian Faith, *whatſoever it may coſt.* This is that which our Saviour adviſes, *Luk.* 14.28. *Which of you intending to build a towre, ſits not down firſt and counteth the coſt, whether he hath ſufficient to finiſh it, leſt happily after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finiſh it, all that behold him, begin to mock him.* It will be no leſs ridiculous for any man to profeſs himſelf a Diſciple of Chriſt and his holy doctrine, that doth not firſt conſider the coſt he may be at, and reſolve to go on with it. And the coſt may be great, the loſs of Father and mother, and whatſoever is neareſt and deareſt to us. *Verſe* 26. *If any man come to me and hates not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and ſiſters, yea and his own life alſo, He cannot be my Diſciple*; he cannot be ſtedfaſt in the Profeſſion of the holy Faith, which may and ſometimes will put him upon this coſt. Let no man ſo far miſtake our Lord, as to think that he teaches

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disobedience to Parents, whose first commandment with promise, is, *Honor thy father and mother*; or that he teaches us to hate our children, who by his Apostle St. *Paul* tells us that they are worse than Infidels, who provide not for their family, 1 *Tim.* 5. 8. or that he teaches us to hate our selves, who hath summed up his Commandments into these two grand precepts, *Love God above all, and thy neighbour as thy self*, St. *Mat.* 22. 40. St. *Lukes* phrase of hating father and mother, &c. is best expounded by St. *Mat.* 10. 37. *He that loves father and mother more than me.* He that prefers father and mother more than me and my doctrine, and will renounce that or any part of it to save them or his own life, and whatsoever is dearest to him in this world, is not worthy of me. The sincere Resolution of preferring God and his holy Truth before all worldly advantages, is that which makes the honest and good heart, which affords depth of earth for the Seed of Gods Word to root in, and bring forth fruit to life eternal, St. *Luk.* 8. 15. Let us therefore retire to our closets and frequently renew this honest purpose and resolution, especially when we come to the holy *Eucharist*, that we may get it seal'd and confirmed there by the Grace of the holy Spirit; let not the cost we may be at affright us; the rich pearl of the holy Faith (the end of which is the salvation of our souls, 1 *Pet.* 1. 9.) is not dearly bought, though we sell all that we have to purchase it, St. *Mat.* 13. 46.

THIS resolution will not continue stedfast, unless we purge out of our hearts all such violent *lusts* and *passions*, as will ravish our Wills from the holy Faith which we have believed; let us therefore be careful to cast out them, especially those which are most dangerous to the stedfastness of the Faith. As,

1. THE *inordinate love* of this present world, this made *Demas* forsake St. *Paul*, after he had been a long time his fellow-laborer in the preaching of the Gospel, 2 *Tim.* 4. 10.

There be too many such, who follow Christs doctrine for gain, who make great profession of this holy Faith, when it fills their baskets, *Jo.* 6. 14. who run away from it as fast, to any impertinent, nay damnable Error which appears more advantageous; if we have hearts exercised with covetous designs, we shall certainly forsake the right way as *Balaam* did for the wages of unrighteousness, 2 *Pet.* 2. 14.

2. *AMBITION* and Vain-glory, *Diotrephes* who loves to have the pre-eminence, receives not the Apostles nor their doctrine, *Jo.* ep. 3. Nay slights their doctrine, vilifies their persons, prating against them with malicious words, *vers.* 10. and all this, to get himself a name and esteem amongst the credulous vulgar. This hath made most of the Hereticks and Schismaticks in elder times, as *Epiphanius* and others have observed; when they thought their worth and merit not enough rewarded, when they could not be so great or powerful as they affected to be; when they could not obtain by the regular and just wayes of preferment, such places and dignities, such esteem and repute, as their ambition made them covet, and think themselves to have deserved; then they broacht new Doctrines, and invented new Disciplines to draw parties after them of the weaker sort, that they might be in a *Faction*, what they could not be in the *Church*, Chiefs and Leaders. Nor doth this Ambition appear only in the Leaders, but every little member of the most ridiculous Sect is swoln with the same tumorous vain-glory, each party affecting to be call'd the Godly. Where this winde of Ambition blows, no wonder if it carries them away to divers and strange doctrines, *Heb.* 13. 9. How can ye believe, receiving or catching at Glory one of another, *Joh.* 5. 44. When the Teachers court the people, and they again the Teachers for applause and reputation, when vain-glory is the end of the design, how can men be stedfast? for when the holy Faith becomes, as oftentimes it does, vile and contemptible in the

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eyes of the people, ſuch men muſt needs forſake it, and profeſs any new, though damnable doctrine, that grows popular. Beſides, no man can hope to ſtand ſtedfaſt in the Faith, without the aſſiſtance of Gods grace, who reſiſts the proud and gives his grace only to the Humble, *Jam.* 4. 6. if we will be conſtant Diſciples of Chriſt we muſt be like him, lowly in Spirit, *Mat.* 11. 29.

3. THERE is in our nature a *ſoftneſs* or tenderneſs that is apt to betray our conſtancy. As many as deſire to make a fair ſhew in the fleſh, θέλοντες εὐπροσωπῆσαι, that would appear with a fair face without a skar, renounce their Chriſtianity and turn Jews; *only leſt they ſhould ſuffer perſecution for the Croſs of Chriſt*, Gal. 6. 12. This tenderneſs made the Apoſtles, St. *Peter* and all, once forſake their Lord; and the ſame hath made too many forſake the Lords holy Truth. It may not perhaps be thought needful to urge this any further at this time, when God be thankt, there is no preſent danger of ſuffering perſecution for the Faith of Chriſt, it being now defended by the *Defender of the Faith*; but though Confeſſors of the Faith and Doctrine of our Lord be not perſecuted by the ſword of Authority, it is, at leaſt ſome part of it, curſtly perſecuted by the ſpears and arrows, and ſharp ſwords of ſlanderous tongues, who like the *Donatiſts* of old, cry out of perſecution, even then when they are thus ſharply perſecuting thoſe who profeſs and preach the holy Truth and Faith of Chriſt. To inſtance in a few particulars, let any man preach or practiſe Decency and *Order* in the Service and Worſhip of God, which is a direct command in Chriſts holy Doctrine, 1 *Cor.* 14. 10. Let him preach or practiſe Loyalty and *Obedience* to the King and his *Laws*, which is part of the ſame holy doctrine, *Rom.* 13. 5. 1 *Pet.* 2. 13. Let him preach or practiſe obedience to the *Church*, according to our Lords direction, *Mat.* 18. 17. And ſubmiſſion to the guidance of thoſe, who by God and mans Laws are ſet over

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us to watch for our Souls, *Heb.* 13. 17. and he shall soon find the truth of that which I have said, his doctrine slandered, and his person reproached and persecuted by malicious tongues. The fear of this persecution we see, hath made some, who are too tender, follow our Lords doctrine as St. *Peter* did his Master, at a distance; it is not amiss to remember, what the Holy Ghost hath observed for our instruction in St. *Peter*, that soon after he drew back and followed at a distance, he forsook, nay forswore his Lord, *Mat.* 26. 58, 74. from all which we may certainly conclude, that we shall never stand stedfast in the Doctrine and Faith of our Lord, unless we indeavour to harden our faces and strengthen our foreheads against all such fear of the looks or tongues of men, *Ezek.* 3. 8, 9.

4. AS there is a tenderness, so there is a *fickleneß* and love of change in our corrupted nature; St. *Paul* calls it childishness, *Eph.* 4. 14. loving much but not long, delighting in change, not only in ordinary matters, dresses and fashions, but even in Religion too; new Prayers, new Doctrines, new Governments; many men having itching ears, heap to themselves Teachers, 2 *Tim.* 4. 3. after their own lusts, such as may rub their ears, and gratifie their lusts and several humors, with doctrines suitable, and please their childishness with novelties; new Revelations, new Truths are by many much affected and daily expected: I pray God we come not to the Jews Innovation, *New Gods* which our Fathers never heard of, *Deut.* 32. 17. We seem weary of the old garment, the old Religion, and love to put new peices to it, though thereby we make it much worse, *Luk.* 5. 36. Nothing can be more directly opposite to our stedfastness in the Truth, then this love of change; since the holy Faith and Christian truth is like Jesus Christ who taught it, the same yesterday and to day, the same for ever, *Heb.* 13. Let us labor therefore to correct this childishness, to quit our selves like men,

men, and earneſtly contend for that Faith which was once and but once delivered, *Jude* 3. By the means aforeſaid we may, by Gods grace, ſecure our ſelves againſt our ſelves, that our own hearts ſhall not miſlead us; but though our hearts be ſincere, our underſtandings may be weak, and we may be daily in danger of being ſeduced by the various arts and ſubtilties of cunning and buſie ſeducers, who lie in wait to deceive; and therefore I ſhall offer this *SECOND Caution*, which our bleſſed Lord hath taught us, *Mat.* 7. 15.

II. BEWARE of falſe Prophets or *falſe Teachers*, as St. *Peter* calls them, 2 *Pet.* 2. 1. and you will readily grant the Caution to be moſt ſeaſonable and neceſſary, if you will conſider, the *Crafts* they uſe to deceive you, and your own danger if you be deceived; inwardly, ſaies our Saviour, they are ravening Wolves, whoſe aim and deſign, is no leſs then the ruine and damnation of your ſouls. What danger can be greater? This cruel and malicious deſign they hide and cover under Sheeps clothing, ſoft and fair pretences of meekneſs and humility, profeſſors of extraordinary holineſs, great care of ſouls, ſingular love of Gods glory, to which they add good words; kind and flattering ſpeeches, *Rom.* 16. 18. and (which is the maſter piece of cunning) they promiſe them liberty, 2 *Pet.* 2. 19. *Simon Magus*, *Baſilides*, *Carpocrates* of old, taught their Diſciples to live as they liſted, and to do whatſoever they pleaſed; *Marcion* taught his Diſciples to believe that Chriſt came into the world to deliver men from the ſervice of the Creator; *Meletius* gave his followers a licence to live without fear, and to be rul'd and govern'd by none. I might inſtance in many more ſuch falſe teachers of the ſame leaven, but I need not, ſince St. *Peter* in the place aforeſaid, aſſures us, that it is the wont of falſe Teachers of what ſort ſoever, to promiſe their followers liberty; this ſweet promiſe of liberty, or rather licenciouſneſs being the moſt catching argument in the world to entice itching ears and luſt-

luſtful hearts to their party. It is not unworthy of our obſervation, that St. *Peter* ſaies they *promiſe* them liberty, but indeed, they neither do nor can, by theſe means make them free, for whoſoever committeth ſin, is the ſervant of ſin. What liberty then can it be, to be expoſed and tempted to the deadly ſlavery of Error and ſin?

FALSE Teachers having all of them ſuch malicious deſigns of ruine and ſuch cunning artifices to deceive; it behoves us very much to remember our Lords Caution, *Beware of falſe Prophets.* But how ſhall we diſcern them to be ſuch? Their inward deſigns we cannot ſee, and their outward appearance is innocent and harmleſs, fair and plauſible, ſheeps clothing, *By their fruits you ſhall know them,* ſaies our Saviour; they may act the ſheep for a while, but if you heed and mark them well, you ſhall ſee the Wolf appear, *by their fruits you ſhall know them.* When you ſee ſome creeping into houſes, and inſtilling doctrines into the weaker ſort; by this you have juſt cauſe to ſuſpect them for falſe Teachers, 2 *Tim.* 3. 6. of this ſort are they which creep into houſes, from ſuch turn away. There ſhall be falſe Teachers among you, who *privily* ſhall bring in damnable doctrines, 2 *Pet.* 2. 1. when they who offer themſelves to be your Teachers, ſhall forſake the lawful and publick aſſemblies eſtabliſhed by juſt authority in the houſes of prayer, by this fruit you may know them. *Beloved remember the words which were ſpoken before of the Apoſtles of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,* How that they told you there ſhould be in the laſt time Mockers or Deceivers, *Jude* 17, 18. Theſe be they who ſeparate themſelves; beware of ſuch therefore, by theſe fruits you ſhall juſtly ſuſpect them to be falſe Teachers; but there is one Character or mark by which you ſhall undoubtedly know them, St. *Paul,* St. *Peter,* St. *Jude,* and all tell us for certain, thoſe are falſe Teachers, by all means to be avoided, who deſpiſe Government, and ſpeak evil of dignities; when therefore you hear any Teachers blaſ-

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pheming and reviling their Governors Civil or Eccleſiaſtical, when you ſee them contemning their Laws, confronting their Authority, refuſing to come at *Moſes* and *Aarons* call, to the Aſſemblies appointed by their Laws; and ſetting up Meetings, gathering aſſemblies againſt *Moſes* and *Aaron*, the Civil and Eccleſiaſtical authority; come not neer, leſt ye periſh in their ſin, *Num.* 16. It is Gods own caution there, *verſ.* 26. and in the like caſe too, for what elſe was the ſin of *Korah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram*, but refuſing to come at the call of *Moſes* and *Aaron*, Num. 16.12. *We will not come up*; and the Gathering Congregations againſt them, *verſ.* 19. And certainly to gather Congregations contrary to the Laws and commands of *Moſes* and *Aaron*, is to gather againſt *THEM*, for it is the Authority that makes the King and the Prieſt; *Moſes* and *Aaron* ſo ſacred that no man muſt riſe againſt them, when therefore you ſee or hear any ſo gathering Congregations contrary to the Laws; Depart from them; when you hear any Teachers thus deſpiſing Dominion, remember that the Apoſtles have told us, they are falſe Teachers, and forget not our Lords own Caution, *Beware of falſe Prophets*; if any man after all this monition will ſtill be bold to receive ſuch, becauſe they come in ſheeps clothing, he deſerves more blame then pitty, if he be ruined and devoured.

III. OBEY your ſpiritual *Guides*, and ſubmit your ſelves to their conduct and direction, *Heb.* 13. 17. This Rule is given us to this very purpoſe, that we may ſtand faſt in the faith. For after the Apoſtle had forewarned us, *verſ.* 9. *Be not carried about with diverſe and ſtrange doctrines*; he preſcribes this as the beſt prevention of ſuch giddineſs and lightneſs to obey them that have the Rule over us, and ſubmit our ſelves to them who watch for our ſouls. Almighty God in infinite goodneſs to man, knowing the weakneſs of the peoples underſtanding, together with the want of time and means for the ſtudy of Truth, hath provided ſome Paſtors and Teach-

ers for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Miniſtry, for the edifying of the Body of Chriſt, *Eph.* 4. 12. *That we henceforth be no more children, toſs'd to and fro, and carried about with every winde of doctrine, by the ſleight of men, and cunning craftineſs of men, whereby they lie in wait to deceive,* Verſ 14. God hath you ſee appointed you Paſtors and Teachers to keep you from being deceived by falſe Teachers, and if you will not ſubmit to their direction, you expoſe your ſelves to the danger of being deceived, and fruſtrate the merciful intendment of Gods goodneſs towards you, to keep you ſtedfaſt in the Truth. I know not what excuſe any man can make why he doth not readily ſubmit to the guidance of theſe Paſtors and Teachers, but only this, *That firſt he does not certainly know whom Chriſt hath appointed for his Guides now, ſince the Apoſtles themſelves are dead long ſince.*

AND if he does know them, yet he cannot confidently relie upon their guidance, ſince they are not infallible in their doctrines, as the Apoſtles were, and therefore may poſſibly be deceived themſelves, and deceive him that ſubmits to them.

TO the firſt I anſwer.

1. YOU may as certainly know who are your Spiritual Guides, as who are your Civil Governors; namely by the Laws of Church and Kingdom, and their ſolemn Inveſtiture in their ſeveral places and charges; Which is a greater and ſurer evidence then any man can have of his natural Parent, whom you cannot otherwiſe know then by the common repute of the neighbourhood, and the Teſtimony of your Mother, who is bound in reputation to call her own husband your father; ſince God hath commanded you, upon pain of damnation to obey him, who is thus reputed your Father; why ſhould you not fear the ſame penalty for diſobeying your Guides of ſouls, whom God hath equally commanded you to obey, and given you a greater evidence and aſſurance of their authority over you.

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TO the second scruple I answer, that I assert no *Infallibility* in your Spiritual Guides. They are men, and may be deceived, they may be cunning men and lie in wait to deceive. And may not those be such, whom you heap to your selves, and so willingly run after? Those who are set over you, are *restrain'd* by the *Laws*, and accountable to their Superiors, so that they cannot publish dangerous Errors without their own danger and the censures of the Laws, if they be discovered; and being allowed to preach *only* in the Church, cannot promise themselves any safety from secrecy. And it is not so probable that they will willingly deceive you, who are in danger to lose by their fraud, as they who by false doctrines make parties to their no small advantage. Besides, God always *assists* his own Institutions, and blesses his own appointments. God hath forewarned you to avoid strangers, to heap to your selves Teachers, 2 *Tim.* 4. 3. and who can reasonably expect Gods assistance in Disobedience? It is just with him to suffer us to be deceived by those whom he hath warned us to avoid; but it is most reasonable to expect his blessing and assistance in obedience to his own order. He hath commanded us to submit to them who are set over us, and will not suffer us to perish by obedience; If we shall be mislead by our own Guides into small Errors, he will graciously accept our obedience, and not impute those Errors to our condemnation; and he will never suffer us to be led by them into damnable Errors, unless it be our own fault, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. *God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able to bear, but with the Temptation will make way to escape*; This promise would fail, if having commanded us to be guided by them, he should not, either certainly withhold them from Teaching Damnable doctrines, or else afford us some means for the avoidance and discovery, if we be watchful, and not willfully refuse them.

1. OBSERVE this Rule of our Saviour, S. *Jo.* 5. 39 *Search*

the Scriptures, acquaint your ſelves with the *plain* and *evident texts* which need no interpretation, and if your Teachers commend any doctrine to you contrary to thoſe, believe them not. It is an old obſervation and daily experience confirms it, that falſe Teachers uſe to build their doctrines upon ſome few hard and obſcure texts, that under the colour of the holy text they may obtrude upon their unwary Diſciples, their own pernicious Gloſſes, Interpretations and inferences; ſo that their diſciples belief reſts only upon the Interpretation of the preacher who may be deceived, or which is worſe, may indeavor to deceive; but when the ſober and wary Chriſtian grounds his belief upon the evident Texts which are ſo plain that they cannot be more plainly expreſſed or interpreted, he relies undoubtedly upon Gods own word who cannot deceive or be deceived. This is the beſt way to ſecure our ſelves againſt the damnable doctrines of your own falſe Teachers; as for example, when you are by any of them taught to rebel againſt the King, or to oppoſe his Laws, to contemn the Church, and ſeparate from her Communion; *Guard* your faith againſt their crafty inſinuations of Rebellion by pretence of obſcure Scriptures, by ſuch plain Texts as theſe, *Let every Soul be ſubject to the higher powers*, to him that bears the ſword not only for wrath but alſo for conſcience ſake, and whoſoever reſiſts ſhall receive damnation, *Rom.* 13. *Be ſubject to every ordinance of man for the Lords ſake, whether it be to the King as Supreme, or unto Governors, who are ſent by him*, 1 Pet. 2. 13. which are words as plain as can be ſpoken, and cannot admit of any other interpretation. Theſe are enough to ſecure you againſt the damnable doctrine of Rebellion, and againſt contempt of the Church and Schiſmatical ſeparation from her Communion; take theſe plain Texts, St. *Mat.* 18. He that will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as an Heathen man and Publican. *Keep the unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*, Eph. 4. 3. *Not forſaking the*

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publick aſſembling of our ſelves, Heb. 10. 25. according to the commands of thoſe who are our Governors, *Heb.* 13. 17.

IF it be *objected* that all theſe Texts do ſuppoſe the Kings and the Churches commands to be lawful, otherwiſe I may, nay I muſt refuſe to obey the King, I muſt not hear the Church, I muſt forſake thoſe Aſſemblies if unlawful. The *anſwer* is eaſie, That I cannot be ſafe in going contrary to theſe plain texts, till I can find, that thoſe particular Commands of my Superiors, and thoſe Aſſemblies, be *as plainly forbidden* in ſome other Texts; It is not ſafe to ſay, I will not obey the the King, nor hearken to the Church, nor frequent thoſe publick Aſſemblies, becauſe I think, and ſome powerful Preachers tell me, theſe ordinances and Aſſemblies are unlawful.

REMEMBER, it is God who commands in thoſe plain Texts before mentioned, and none but himſelf can diſcharge my obedience, and therefore you muſt obey till you find the particular commands of your Superiors forbidden by as *plain* Texts, as thoſe which in general require you to obey. If you obſerve this rule, you cannot be cheated into Rebellion and Schiſm, and if you do not, it is your own fault, that you are deceived.

THIS Rule is certain, but perhaps not large enough to ſecure us from all *damnable* Errors, there being ſome ſuch, which may not ſeem flat contrary to the expreſs words of Scripture; the neceſſary Truths of which thoſe errors are deſtructive, not being delivered in expreſs terms in the holy Scriptures, yet ſufficiently contained therein, and may be undoubtedly proved out of them by comparing of Texts, obſerving the context, and ſcope of the Text, and other rules of Art; Which the people not being ſo well able to do, let them obſerve this ſecond rule.

2. KEEP ſtedfaſt in the *Faith* of all ſuch Truths as the *Catholick* Apoſtolick Church hath *believed* and *delivered* as

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neceſſary, and believe not your *particular* Guide, when he teaches contrary to theſe. The Church is the ground and pillar of Truth, 1*Tim.* 3. 5. into her boſome and Regiſtry, the Apoſtles committed all neceſſary Truths as our Lord commanded them, *Mat.* 28. 19, 20. Go teach all Nations to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you, they knew their Lords Commands and were true to their truſt in teaching them accordingly. Theſe neceſſary truths thus laid up in the Treaſury of the Church are Domeſtick houſhold doctrines, which all of that Family ſhould hold faſt, and not be carried about with every winde of ſtrange or forein doctrine, *Heb.* 13. 9. Theſe neceſſary truths, committed by the Apoſtles to the Churches of their own plantation, God hath promiſed, *Mat.* 28. 20. ſhould be delivered down through all ſucceſſion to the end of the world, *Lo I am with you* (namely in the teaching all that I have commanded) *to the end of the world.* What therefore hath been conſtantly delivered and believed as commands of Chriſt, by the *general Teſtimony* of the *univerſal Church* in all ages, ought to be firmly believed; upon the ſame conſentient Teſtimony we receive and believe the *Canonical Scriptures* to be the word of God, and why ſhould we not be ſatisfied with the ſame Teſtimony of all other neceſſary Truths? *But how ſhall the people be able to know which Truths are ſo generally delivered from the firſt ages till now*; they cannot themſelves ſearch and finde them, and perhaps their own Teachers may tell them that their Errors are ſuch.

I ANSWER, you may finde and know theſe neceſſary truths, *by the publick doctrine of our own Church, delivered in her Liturgy* and Articles *of Religion*, by the unanimous conſent of *all your ſpiritual Guides.* Acquaint your ſelves throughly with that publick doctrine and adhere to that, and if your own Teacher teach otherwiſe, believe him not. If to theſe directions here given, you carefully attend, adding your conſtant humble

humble *prayers* to that Merciful God who would have no man to periſh, but that all ſhould come to the knowledge of the Truth, 1 *Tim.* 2. 4. He will certainly preſerve you from all damnable Errors, and keep you ſtedfaſt in the holy Faith; That faith which is the ground and foundation of the lively hope of *an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in Heaven for you,* 1 Pet. 1. 3, 4. that Faith by which through the power of God ye are kept unto Salvation, *verſ.* 5. that faith, which being preſerv'd firm and ſtedfaſt, after it hath been tried by manifold temptations will be found unto Praiſe, and Honour, and Glory at the appearance of Jeſus Chriſt, *Verſ.* 6, 7. That faith which makes us here in this life to rejoyce with joy unſpeakable, and full of Glory, *Verſ.* 8. and in the end brings us to the ſalvation of our ſouls, *Verſ.* 9. which God of his infinite mercy grant us all, for Jeſus Chriſts ſake, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt be all honour and Glory, world without end. *Amen.*

FINIS.